

April 1, 2010 Vision 2020 Public Comments

Public Comment was provided by Mr. Len Lindenmeyer from Fayetteville who advocated for Franklin County establishing a Community College. He noted there are only three choices for part-time community colleges for Franklin Countians and they are located in Hagerstown, Gettysburg or Harrisburg. Mr. Lindenmeyer said because of its community college in Gettysburg, Adams County 1,000 more citizens who attend college than Franklin County. He said citizens, businesses and Franklin County would all benefit from a community college. The County could partner with high schools to start evening classes. Mr. Lindenmeyer would like an education component put into the Comprehensive Plan document. Commissioner Keller asked if Mr. Lindenmeyer would like the County to financially support a community college and Mr. Lindenmeyer responded yes.

Commissioner Keller opened the floor for additional comments or questions from those in attendance.

Marylyn Smith thanked everyone and has learned a lot. Drug & Alcohol has developed a coalition for prevention of substance abuse and use and has been meeting for couple years. The group is trying to address prevention. Ms. Smith is on Vision 2015, a Waynesboro planning group, and would really like to see a Franklin County staff a satellite office in Waynesboro a couple times a month so that people don't have to drive to Chambersburg. She noted that it might only require one person and a computer.

John Gorman would like to expand the use of funds set aside for heritage tourism preserving Civil War sites. There are several significant historic sites in Blue Ridge Summit. Investment in the sites would be an economic generator for Franklin County and could create 15-20 jobs. In Gettysburg 2,600 jobs were created there related to tourism. State revenue in Gettysburg is 11 Billion a year and 121 Million dollars are spent from tourists. Mr. Gorman would like Commissioners to allow some money set aside to be used for land acquisition that would yield huge results.

Craig Newcomer works for a non profit organization. He said he it is refreshing to work with the county and when he walks away from his dealings with the county it is with a feeling of accomplishment. He deals with a lot of people in the county and commends everyone for help.

Paul Gunder spoke on behalf of Waynesboro Industrial Development Corporation. He said he was delighted to see Commissioner Ziobrowski include the Redevelopment Authority in his opening comments and is glad to see that the Commissioners are getting serious about this. He noted the county is growing and needs an entity here that will help salvage some old buildings so the Redevelopment Authority would be a great asset. Mr. Gunder asked what is the process and how long would anticipate taking. John Hart responded that County is very close to a decision. Mr. Hart says the County Solicitor has drafted some documents for Board consideration which include an ordinance that will need advertised so the public can have input. The Board will then have to decide who will sit as Redevelopment Authority Board members. Mr. Hart mentioned that within next 30-60 days he anticipates results.

Mike Christopher spoke and wanted to mention that this group of people do a great job and are good managers. Mr. Christopher works with Phil Tarquino and he does an outstanding job and is Mr. Christopher is impressed about fine work at the County level. Mr. Christopher thanked the Commissioners for crossing over to Waynesboro area and their help with other projects, including support of a Waynesboro transportation relief route and support of other projects state level. He said he participates in many County affiliated groups and boards and it's worth his time to travel to Chambersburg for the meetings.

Representative Todd Rock spoke and wanted to clarify Warden's statement about state budget. He noted the state has put 11 Billion into k-12 public education and that education is the key to success. Representative Rock agrees that we can't stop spending money on education and thanked board for coming to town.

Julie Mentzer spoke and would like to know how all this affects her, as an employee, since County employees hours were cut and loss of benefits, will any of this change? Ms. Mentzer would also like to know how this affects her as a volunteer and glad to see there are changes that will help volunteers. Ms. Mentzer also would like to know how this will affect her as a taxpayer and wants to know how taxes will be in next 10 years and how her paycheck will be affected.

John Hart responded that the purpose of Vision 2020 is to be efficient and data driven and will need community input but he could not say taxes will not go up in the next 20 years. He noted there is a tremendous demand in for Human Services, which will increase because veterans coming back from conflict will need services, which cost money. Mr. Hart mentioned that the County will do best can to keep operations efficient and effective as can. Elder abuse is increasing tremendously, especially financial abuse. The County needs to react to changing situations and stay ahead of the curve. Decisions must be data-driven. The County will put forth its best effort, based on the best data available and make the best decision that it can.

Commissioner Keller responded that the County had to make certain cuts due to the financial situation but there are certain services that the County provides that if discontinued the County would pay more it in the long run. The County will not make decisions that will cost the County money. Commissioner Keller stated that some positions or hours cut will come back and some will not.

Commissioner Ziobrowski responded that tax assessments for properties are fixed. Because of that with inflation it is inevitable that over time the cost of expansion of judicial facilities will be high, but the efficiencies that result will make the expense worthwhile.